LABORATORY RESEARCH IN
HEALTH PSYCHOLOGY

Psychology 261
Fall 2013
Section 1: Tues 2:00-5:00 pm
Section 2: Wed 2:00-5:00 pm
Olin 116
2 credits

Instructor:
Kenneth Abrams, Ph.D.
Office: 133 Olin
Office Hours: 12:45-1:45 Tuesdays and Wednesdays, or by appointment
Phone: (507) 222-5024
Email: kabrams@carleton.edu

Course Description:
Just about everyone engages in sub-optimal levels of a healthy behavior or excessive levels of an unhealthy behavior. For example, do you eat unhealthy meals regularly or exercise insufficiently? Do you smoke cigarettes or consume too much alcohol? Do you sometimes bike without a helmet or drive without a seat belt?

The Self-Directed Health Psychology Project for this course will provide you with direct experience applying principles of health psychology. The goal of your project will be to increase the frequency of a healthy behavior or decrease the frequency of an unhealthy behavior. By collecting and analyzing data throughout the term, you will learn how these principles and methods are applied in real life. This may be beneficial if you pursue a career in health or clinical psychology or if you simply wish to modify behaviors you identify as problematic down the road.

Additionally, as a basis for discussion, on most weeks we will read a case study or watch a film that relates to the current topic in the lecture section of the course. There will also be periodic demonstrations of various health psychology techniques (e.g., biofeedback, hypnosis, yoga) in which all students may take part.

Co-requisite:
Psychology 260

Course Readings:
All assigned readings can be found through eReserves.
Grading Criteria and Policy

Final grades in this course will be based on the following assignments:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>% of Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>general participation</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>leading discussions</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Directed Health Psychology Project (SDHPP)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>weekly assignments and record keeping</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>final report</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Class Format, Class Participation, and Activities:
Most classes will have the following components:
• student-led discussion of the assigned case study
• presentation of new behavior modification principles and techniques
• further development of student SDHPPs
• peer review of SDHPPs

Your informed participation is an important requirement for this class. To do well on the participation component of the grade, you will want to regularly demonstrate through your comments and questions that you have read and thought critically about the assigned readings. Please be aware that the bar for achieving an “A” on this component of the grade is high. While it is possible for each student to achieve this grade, it requires a record of consistent and meaningful contributions to the discussions.

Leading Class Discussions:
You are asked, once or twice during the term, to co-lead for approximately 30 minutes a discussion and activity on the assigned case study. Leading a discussion entails asking the class questions and responding effectively to student responses. (I will chime in with questions of my own as well.) Co-leaders should also choose to engage the class in a creative way (e.g., debate, role-play, game) for part of the time period. Please work with your partner to develop six open-ended and provocative questions (no pressure!) and one creative activity based on the case study for that day. Evaluations will be based on the quality of the discussion questions and the effectiveness of one’s leading of the discussion.

Please post the questions for the class by 6 pm two days prior to your discussion date. To ensure high-level discussions, all students are asked to print the discussion questions and respond in writing to each in advance of class.
Self-Directed Health Psychology Project
To provide direct experience in the use of principles we will cover this semester, you will conduct a behavior modification project of which you will be the subject. Through a guided series of steps, you will develop and execute a project aimed at changing your behavior in a way that would promote health. Ideally, the behavior should be one that, if changed, would have a significant impact on your life. At the same time, the target behavior shouldn’t be so severe in its nature that it requires more intense attention than can be provided in the course (e.g., alcohol dependence). Additionally, the behavior should be one that you feel comfortable discussing within the confines of the class.

We will frequently discuss the progress of projects in class so that students can help each other modify and trouble-shoot the projects as needed. Additionally, you will be asked regularly to turn in progress reports and, at the end of the term, a brief report that details the results of your project.

Grades:
Grades will be determined on a scale not more stringent than the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>92-100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-91.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>88-89.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>82-87.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80-81.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>78-79.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>72-77.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70-71.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>68-69.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>60-67.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0-59.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Additional Course Information

Students with Special Needs:
Carleton is committed to providing reasonable accommodations to students with documented disabilities. Students requesting accommodations must place documentation on file with the Coordinator of Disability Services, who will then inform faculty about student accommodations.

Late Assignments:
Late assignments will be accepted, but at the penalty of one-third of a grade per weekday. For example, a “B+” assignment due on Tuesday but submitted on Thursday would receive a grade of “B-” (i.e., two-thirds of a grade lower). Exceptions to the penalty can occur with highly legitimate excuses. Such legitimate excuses include family emergencies, major illness, or events of similar seriousness. Being excessively burdened with work can certainly be stressful but unfortunately does not qualify as a legitimate excuse! The instructor shall determine the legitimacy of any excuse.
SCHEDULE

Week 1: 9/17

SDHPP (Self-Directed Health Psychology Project)
Targets and Goals

Technique Demonstration
Biofeedback

Week 2: 9/24

SDHPP
Outcome Measures and Structured Diaries

Week 3: 10/1

SDHPP
Antecedents

Case Study: Stress

Technique Demonstration
Progressive Muscle Relaxation
Hypnosis

Week 4: 10/8

SDHPP
Behaviors

Case Study: HIV
Week 5: 10/15

SDHPP
Consequences: Acceleration

**Case Study: Pain Disorder**

Optional: *Migraines* from MayoClinic.com

**Technique Demonstration**
Acupuncture

Straub, pp. 459-464

Week 6: 10/22

SDHPP
Consequences: Deceleration

**Film: Coping Techniques**
*Healing and Prayer: Power or Placebo?* (2001)

**Technique Demonstration**
Meditation

Week 7: 10/29

SDHPP
Developing a Plan
*Note:* Implement your plan following this class.

**Case Study: Hypertension**

Optional: *Hypertension* from MayoClinic.com

**Technique Demonstration**
Yoga
Week 8: 11/5

SDHPP
Problem Solving

Film: Addiction
Deadly Persuasion (2003)

Technique Demonstration
The Carbon-Dioxide Rebreathing Lab


Week 9: 11/12

SDHPP
Relapse Prevention

Case Study: Bulimia Nervosa

Optional: Bulimia Nervosa from MayoClinic.com

Week 10: 11/19
SDHPP reports due in class 11/19

Film: Cancer
Wit (2001) or The Doctor (1991)